From Somewhere in The World

Assata Shakur Speaks—

Message to the New Afrikan Nation

WHO IS ASSATA SHAKUR?

During the late sixties many Black Women joined the ranks of the thousands of Black Freedom Fighters within the borders of the United States. These women found themselves making a total commitment to the Black Liberation Struggle, and in making this commitment gave up the illusion of the American Dream, gave up the American glamorous career girl lifestyle and adopted instead the lifestyle of the black Revolutionary Women. They dedicated their lives to the liberation struggle of their people by any means necessary.

From among these ranks of revolutionary Black women emerged Sister Assata Shakur, portraying the indomitable spirit of Black Revolutionary Womanhood.

Assata was born and spent her early life in North Carolina where the vicious oppression of her people was very vivid. Her family moved to New York and after a short time Assata quit school to go to work, but eventually returned to complete high school and go to college. While in college and involved in political activities she was introduced to the Black Panther Party by Zayd Malik Shakur and became a member.

Shortly thereafter the United States government accomplished what it had attempted to do for a number of years, split the Black Panther Party. It was during this period that the Black liberation army, an armed clandestine formation emerged in response to the colonial violence and genocidal practice of the United States Government.

In May 1973 Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli were captured and their comrade Zayd Malik Shakur killed in the United States war strategy COINTELPRO which was designed to destroy the Black Liberation Movement. After the legal lynching Assata and Sundiata were sentenced to life plus 30 years. After spending 6 long years in prison often times in men's prison and solitary confinement, on November 2, 1979, 3 days before the National Black Human Rights Coalition led 5000 people to the United Nations, under the banner of Self-determination for the New Afrikan Nation, armed clandestine forces—combatants in the war of national liberation, liberated Sister Assata from Clinton State Prison.

In Her statement to the UN Demonstration Assata said "Malcolm X had his dream and his dream was Land, Nationhood. And his dream has become my dream." Over one year later Assata is still free and continuing the fight to free the New Afrikan Nation.

There is nothing exceptional or extraordinary about Sister Assata. She like thousands of others is dedicated to the Independence of the New Afrikan Nation. What she does represent, however, is very clear, and that is the emerging Revolutionary New Afrikan Women.

This pamphlet is a transcription of a message from Assata, November 1980.

HARRIET TUBMAN...principal conductor of the Underground Railroad

Uhuru, sisters and brothers. The first thing I want to say is that I love you and the second thing I want to say is that We can win, We will win our liberation. But in order to win our liberation, We have got to think positively. We have got to believe that We can win, and if We don't believe it, We're whipped before We start. We've got to realize what dangers exist and We've got to look at those dangers realistically. We can't afford to have a subjective distorted irrational fear. We've got to look at the obstacles to our liberation coolly and clearly and develop ways to get rid of those obstacles. Right now, it's the most important thing in the world now for us to struggle. For us to fight for our liberation and our nation. We've got to look at our reality in America right now. The lines are being drawn. The direction that this government is moving is becoming quite clear. The right wing, the conservative fascist element is multiplying like crazy. We're being moved on, sisters and brothers, from all sides. Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter are struggling to determine who is going to be the next Hitler. America is becoming more and more fascist. This period is similar to Germany in the 1930's. In the eyes of this government, We are expendable, We are unnecessary, We are expendable, We are excess labor. They've got machines to replace us, they don't need us anymore, We are a thorn in their side. We are no longer profitable to the American big business economy. Neither Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan gives a damn about Black people. And if anybody, anywhere, has any illusions, that Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan care one bit about Black people you've got to be crazy. You've got to be insane. And neither Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan are fit to rule anything. Jimmy Carter couldn't even run a peanut farm, anybody who has seen one of Ronald Reagan's movies knows that he couldn't even act. That's why he can't even act like he gives a damn about Black people today. Our lives, brothers and sisters are in danger. Look at the history of this country and you'll see that the u.s. government is capable of anything. You saw how they wiped out the Indian, you saw how they wiped out the Mohicans. You think they would hesitate for one moment to do the same thing to us.

Sisters and brothers, We are being attacked from all sides. Our children, our babies are strung out on drugs. Eight, nine, ten, eleven year old children are sticking needles into their arms. Our daughters, the mothers of our future, 11, 12 year old girls are out in the streets selling their bodies for nickels and dimes. Our children don't have a future in America. There's nothing for children to look forward to. You bring a child into this world and there's nothing out

there for them. Our children aren't being educated in the schools. The schools are warehouses. The schools are producing a whole generation of illiterates where high school children can't read and write. In New York City, one half of the students in public schools, drop out before they get to high school. What kind of school system is that? There are no jobs. There are no jobs for our youth, no jobs for our people. And since there are no jobs, our people are forced to survive the best way We know how and the prisons sit there like monsters, waiting to gobble up our children. Our situation is critical, is critical. The Ku Klux Klan is out in the open. They're going around burning crosses, burning down houses, beating Black people, murdering Black people. And this ain't something you were reading about in Roots, this is real, this is going on right now.

December 1978: Randall Whitfield, a Black minister from Alabama, was dragged into the woods and beaten by the Klan because he had the nerve to say that Tommy Lee Hines did not get a fair trial.

January 1979: A Black family's home is burned in N.Y.

October 1979: Darryl Williams, a young and promising Black athlete was shot and paralyzed in Boston, by a white sniper.

December 1979: In Greensboro, North Carolina, 5 people were murdered in cold blood by the Ku Klux Klan while the police disappeared into thin air.

January 1980: Jimmy Lee Campbell was murdered for sport by two white men. They killed Jimmy Lee Campbell because they had failed to bag an animal on their hunting trip, so they found a young nigger animal and they killed him.

Pontiac Brothers

April 1979: In Wrightsville, Georgia, a 9 year old Black sister was shot by the Klan after a rally protesting discrimination in housing and jobs.

April 1980: South Carolina, a Black man was castrated and lynched by the Klan and crosses were burned at the homes of two Black families.

April 1980: Four Black women were shot by a gang of white youth. The gang was later acquitted by an all white jury.

May 1980: 4 Black churches are firebombed in New York City.

October 1980: An article appeared in Newsweek magazine, entitled *The Ku Klux Klan Goes Military.* The article showed pictures of the Ku Klux Klan in army fatigues, carrying M16 rifles, training for what they call the race war.

October 1980: Atlanta, imposes a curfew on its youth because 14 Black children have disappeared and ten of them have been found murdered.

Our situation, sisters and brothers, is critical. Herb Covington, a Nazi, ran for attorney general, in the republican primaries and won 43% of the vote. Tom Metzger, the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in California, won the Democratic nomination in the most populous district in the U.S. And the New York State Court of appeals decided that it was perfectly all right for the Ku Klux Klan to work as prison guards. This is the situation that We are dealing with, sisters and brothers, right here and right now in the 1980's.

In Illinois, the state of Illinois is attempting to murder 17 Black and Hispanic Brothers. 17 of our blood, 17 of our flesh.

July 22, 1978 there was a rebellion at Pontiac prison. The brothers rebelled against the Ku Klux Klan activity within the prison, against brutality leveled against Black and Latin prisoners, against poor medical care, filthy and inadequate food, against overcrowding, against the lack of human rights, civil rights or any other kinds of rights. In the process of that rebellion, prison property was destroyed and 3 guards were killed.

The state of Illinois has no evidence with which to charge anyone with the death of those guards. For nine months after the rebellion the prison officials and the FBI isolated, brutalized and tortured those prisoners, until after 9 months of being denied access to lawyers, and all basic necessities of life, a few weak prisoners were threatened and coerced into saying whatever the administration wanted them to say. At which point the state indicted 31 Black and Latin Brothers, 17 were to be tried for murder

and 14 to be tried on lesser charges. The state of Illinois will do everything possible to insure those brothers do not receive a fair trial. The state of Illinois is attempting to railroad those brothers to the electric chair. And brothers and sisters, We cannot let that happen, We have got to come out in mass and support the Pontiac Brothers.

The *system of justice* in this country is used and has always been used to commit genocide against Black people. And always the jails in america, have been filled with a disproportionate number of Black and Third World people.

Just to show you how worthless this government considers Black lives, the state of Georgia has a sister on death row for peeking in a window. Now I know that doesn't sound like it makes much sense, but the system of justice in america doesn't make any sense. The sister's name is Erma Ruth Cunningham and the state of Georgia, alleges that her husband robbed a white man and during the course of that robbery, killed him. Emma Ruth Cunningham, went to see about her husband, she was arrested and charged with murder, and because they had absolutely no evidence to substantiate this charge, the prosecutor told the sister that unless she signed a statement saying that she had peeked into a window before the robbery and had seen some of the robbery money, that they would take her children away from the home of her parents. At no time did the prosecution ever allege that she was in the house during the robbery or in any way directly connected with the robbery or murder. The state of Georgia knows that this sister did not kill anybody. The only thing that the sister is ever accused of is peeking in a window. Yet this sister was convicted of something called vicarious liability and sentenced to death.

We cannot permit the depraved and arbitrary murders of our people by the united states government. The prisons and the death penalty are used to enslave and murder our sisters and brothers. And often those trageted are the strongest, most intelligent, most respected members of our community. The most politically and culturally aware sisters and brothers are often singled out because the government hopes that by isolating and destroying them, it could also isolate and destroy our resistance movement. The prisons of america are concentration camps which are gradually being turned into extermination camps. We have got to develop a strong movement to defend our brothers and sisters on death row, we've got to build a strong movement to defend the Pontiac Brothers, and a strong movement to defend

political prisoners and prisoners of war. Black revolutionary prisoners, like Sundiata Acoli, Richard Dhoruba Moore, and Geronimo Pratt are behind bars for no other reason than they are committed to the liberation of Afrikan people here in the united states and all over the world.

Our situation right now is critical. We can't run from it or hide from it. We're going to have to get down to the nitty gritty. We've got to determine who We are. Are We house niggers who are going to walk peacefully into the gas chambers, or are We field niggers, who are going to fight until we're free? We didn't come here no house niggers. We didn't come here from Afrika no punks. We didn't come here from Afrika no fools. We didn't come here no Uncle Toms, hemming and hawing, shufflin' and jiving, scratching our heads and kissing the feet of our masters. We didn't come here like that. We came here proud, strong, beautiful Afrikans. We came here with a culture, with pride, We came here knowing who We were. We came here an intelligent, sensitive people, who fought and struggled on every level from the moment that We were brought here in chains. We have got to realize who We are and We've got to realize that we've got a tradition to carry on. Sisters and brothers, our backs are up against the wall. This is the reality of our situation today. We are being attacked in every direction. The government has declared war on us. Big business has de-

clared war on us. The Ku Klux Klan has declared war on us. The police have declared war on us. We cannot walk down our own streets unmolested. Sisters and brothers, this is one of the most crucial periods in our history. This period will determine if We survive as a people. You take any creature, any living being on this earth, and you back it into a corner and that creature, that being, is going to come out fighting. That's the law of nature, that's the law of survival.

Sisters and brothers, our backs are against the wall and We have to come out fighting. We've got to come out fighting with knowledge, with a plan, with a strategy for winning. We can't fight like We fought in the past. We can't rely on one or two tactics. We have got to use every tactic imaginable. We can't afford to let our enemies set up the rules of the game. They have the guns and We turn the cheek. We don't have any more cheeks left to turn. **Our backs are up against the wall and more than anytime in our history, more than anytime of our history of being captives in America, We need an army. We need an army to defend ourselves and We need an army to fight for our liberation.** It is the duty of all Black people to defend ourselves. It is our duty to defend our homes, to defend our children, to defend our communities against racist attacks. And if We neglect that duty then We are damning our children to a life of oppression and misery.

History has shown us that We will never win our liberation through legislation, through the judicial system, or through integrating with white people. And it's equally clear that We cannot win our liberation through the ballot, voting for the lesser of two evils. We need a cohesive solid plan to win our liberation. **We need a nation. Sisters and brothers, nobody on the face of this earth has more of a need of a right to a nation than We do. We aren't citizens of america, We are victims of america.** And We have a right to determine our own destinies. And anyone who says that We don't, is either the worst kind of racist dog, or the worst kind of uncle tom. When Black people, New Afrikans, get serious about our liberation, there is nothing that can stop us. One thing that Black people can do is fight and We can fight because We grew up fighting from the time that We were babies. We have to fight to survive. And when We stop fighting each other, when We stop fighting as individuals and fight as a united Black nation, then We can't lose. We'll give america the blues. We can make them suffer so bad they'll be glad to give us our nation.

Our backs are up against the wall and more than anytime in our history, more than anytime of our history of being captives in America. We need an army. We need an army to defend ourselves and We need an army to fight for our liberation.

WHIRLWIND
(for Assata Shakur)

You don't know where to find me
to lock me up and bind me
You look where you thought I might
have been

I live in the eyes of the people
the hearts and minds of the people
You look for me in the alleys and
I ride the wind

No matter how you treat me
lock me up and beat me
I'm determined to one day break free

I live in the eyes of the people
the hearts and minds of the people
You look for me in the streets and
I'm in the breeze

I'm a panther a phantom
a soldier in worker's dress
I'll rise up in the east
and then strike you from the west

I'm a cobra a tiger
an urban freedom fighter
I'm certainly not where
you thought I might have been

I live in the eyes of the people
the hearts and minds of the people
I'm certainly not where
you thought I might have been

I know you're going to look for me
so if you look for me
Look for me...

In the whirlwiiiiinnd

Makungu Akinyela

New Afrikan Sisters Demonstrating in New Rochelle (Photo by New Afrikan)

At this time, I'd like to say a few words especially to my sisters: **Sisters, Black people will never be free unless Black women participate in every aspect of our struggle, on every level of our struggle,** I think that Black women, more than anybody on the face of this earth, recognize the urgency of our situation. Because it is We who come face to face daily with the institutions of our oppression. And because it is We who have borne the major responsibility of raising our children. And it is We, who have to deal with the welfare systems that do not care about our welfare or the welfare of our children. And it is We who have to deal with the racist doctors and the racist clinics. And it is We who have to deal with the school systems that do not educate our children. It is We who have to deal with the racist teachers who teach our children to hate themselves. It is We who have seen the terrible effect of racism on our children. We who have watched our young grow too old, too soon. We who have watched our children come home angry and frustrated and seen them grow more bitter, more disillusioned with the passing of each day. And We have seen the sick, trapped look on the faces of our children when they come to fully realize what it means to be Black in america. And We know what deprivation is. How many times have We run out of bus fare, rent money, food money, and how many times have our children gone to school in hand-me-downs, with holes in their shoes. We know what a hell-hole america is. We're afraid to let our children go out to play. We're afraid to walk the streets at night. We sisters, We have seen our young, the babies that We brought into this world with such great hopes for, We have seen their bodies bloated and aching from drugs, scarred and deformed by bullet holes.

We know what oppression is. We have been abused in every way imaginable. We have been abused economically, politically. We have been abused physically and We have been abused sexually. And sisters, We have a long and glorious history of struggle on this land/planet. Afrikan women were strong and courageous warriors long before We came to this country in chains. And here in america, our sisters have always been on the front lines. Sister Harriet Tubman led the underground railroad. And sisters like Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Sandra Pratt, Queen Mother Moore have carried it on. Sisters, We have been the backbone of our families, We have been the backbone of our communities, and We will be the backbone of our nation. We have got to build strong family units, based on love and struggle. We don't have no time to play around. **A revolutionary woman can't have no reactionary man.** If he's not about liberation, if he's not about struggle, if he ain't about building a strong Black family, if he ain't about building a strong Black nation, then he ain't about nothing. We know how to struggle. We know how to struggle and fenagle to survive. We know what it means, sisters, to struggle tooth and nail. We know what it means to struggle with love. We know what unity is. We know what sisterhood is. We have always been kind to each other, brought each other hot soup and biscuits. We have always helped each other through the hard times. Sisters, We must celebrate Afrikan womanhood. We don't want to be like Miss Ann. She can keep her false eyelashes and her false, despoiled image of womanhood. She can keep her mink stole and her French provincial furniture. We will define for ourselves what womanhood is. And We will create our own style and our own ways of dress. We can't have no white man in France telling Afrikan women what to look like. We will create our own New Afrikan way of living. We will create our own way of being and living our own New Afrikan culture, taking the best of the old and mixing it with the new. **Sisters, We have got to take control of our lives and our future wherever We are, and We have got to organize ourselves into a strong body of Afrikan women.** Sisters, We've got to take responsibility for educating our children. We can't leave the job of teaching our young, our futures, in the hands of teachers who don't care about our children; in the hands of teachers who don't understand the history, the culture and the language of our children. We have got to teach them ourselves, and in order to do that We have got to start teaching ourselves. We have got to build survival collectives, We've got to open up liberation schools, We've

got to open up our own child care centers, We've got to pool our resources to survive. We've got to use the resources in our community. Sisters, We've got to take control of our lives, We've got an enormous job ahead. We've got to rebuild our communities, We've got to build an underground railroad, We've got to build a nation.

I just want to take a moment out to express my love to all of you who risk your lives daily struggling out here on the front lines. And I'd like to express my gratitude and my love for the many sisters and brothers who have opened their doors and their hearts to me. The sisters and brothers who risk their lives daily to feed and house me and to help me build our underground railroad. Sisters and brothers, **WE WILL WIN!!**

FREE GERONIMO PRATT,
SUNDIATA ACOLI,
DHORUBA MOORE,
DESSIE WOODS,
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS,
FREE THE PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS OF WAR,

UHURU, SISTERS AND BROTHERS.

FREE THE LAND

BY CHOICE YOU ARE ASSATA

By choice you are a Black freedom fighter,
You choose to rebel against a
criminal system in the name of
freedom and dignity for self and kind.

By choice you are a Black woman,
fighting to raise other Ndugu na
Dada by revolutionary example to cast
off their garb of peversity
in their blind pursuit of the
amerikkkan nightmare.

By choice you are the purifier of
our Afrikan humanity, your every
act my Sister was designed
to restore life to a nation killed
by wrong ideas.

By choice you are the matrix out of
which many Black warriors will
emerge, in their right hand they will
bear the seal of the New Nation.

By choice you are a doctor that is healing
thousands of sick minds
mutilated by the germ of
oppression.

By choice, Assata, you are the reality
that we must face if we are to survive
and ultimately, Assata, create a world where
freedom and dignity will reign supreme
for Afrikan people.

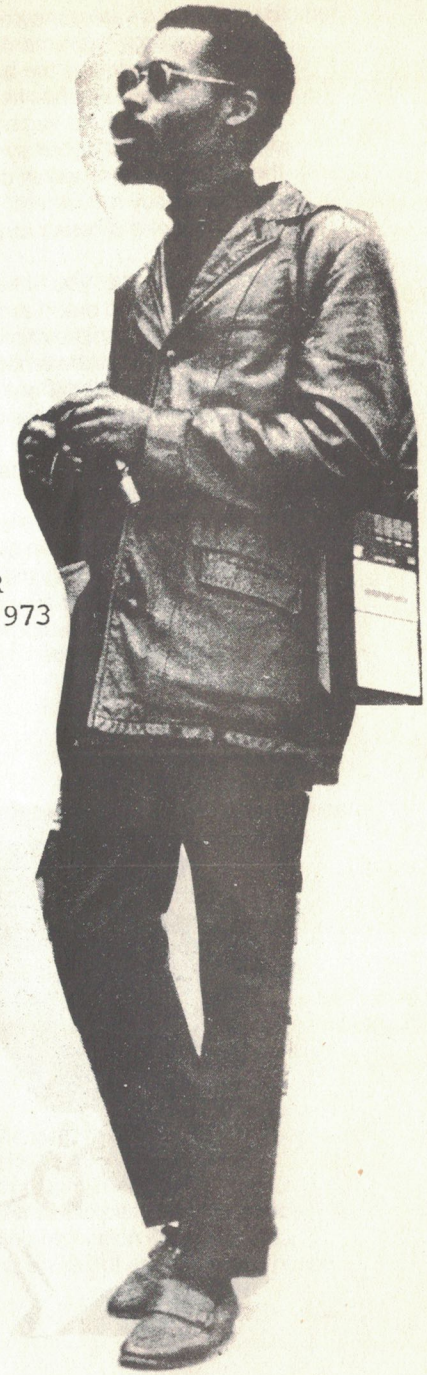
By choice, Assata, you refuse to listen
to the voices of the political
scavengers feeding on the debilitated
minds of those hopeless
souls raped in the arena of
democracy by the amerikkkan
nightmare.

By choice, you liberated Afrikan
warriors from the graves
of nigger minds
you shattered the bastile of ignorance
by injecting revolution into the minds,
souls, and bodies of an oppressed nation.

By choice, you are our symbol of truth,
your every body movement say to the
Black man blinded by the brutality of
the white whore that has kept him
prostrated before the vagina of a
dying society, raise your eyes from
the filth of the amerikkkan dream and
watch my body movement, watch me move
to the beat of a different drummer.

By choice, Assata, you turned us into a
brave and proud army.
Now we move with the same rhythm that
moves you against the amerikkkan dream.
We too are dedicated to the death of
the monster called oppression.

By choice, we now turn to face the
nation of our survival
and the synthetic melodies of the
amerikkan dream fades in the back
ground as we move with the celestial
beat of sun-ra, to outer space, outer
their space of oppression into our
space of beingus,
Afrikan People.



ZAYD MALIK SHAKUR
JUNE 6 1939 - MAY 2 1973

THE NEW AFRIKAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Since the first act of aggression by any invader committed against the Afrikan nation, the Afrikan woman has been demonstrating her indomitable will to resist.

Long before Queen Nzinga fought to repel the Portuguese invaders from Angola, Afrikan women had shown their intelligence and courage in recognizing her enemy and inevitably doing battle with him.

In 1897, in Zimbabwe, a medium in the traditional Afrikan religions, and a woman of considerable fortitude—Nehandla, led the first war of national liberation for her people. She knew exactly what action to take against the criminal Cecil Rhodes and his mercenary companies. When all other forces clamored to have meaningful dialogue with the enemy, her rush was to attack with weapon in hand.

On this continent, Nanny Prosser planned and executed many acts of military sabotage against the slaveholders.

Harriet Tubman commanded her underground army without ever losing a soldier.

Today, Assata Shakur's will to resist illegal confinement and capture is a further example of the fighting soul of Afrikan women.

The New Afrikan Women's Organization is proud to be a part of this great legacy. We believe that the struggle to win self-determination, independence and land for Black people born in America, *can only be won* with the full and active participation of the conscious, active and committed New Afrikan Woman.

As conscious New Afrikan women, We are grounded in the revolutionary nationalism of the Father of our nation—El Hajj Malik Shabazz—Malcolm X. As active women We are rooted in the examples of involvement set forth by our sister in arms—Assata Shakur.

As committed women, We are welded to the unshakable determination to continue struggling in spite of obstacles, hardships and continued repression.

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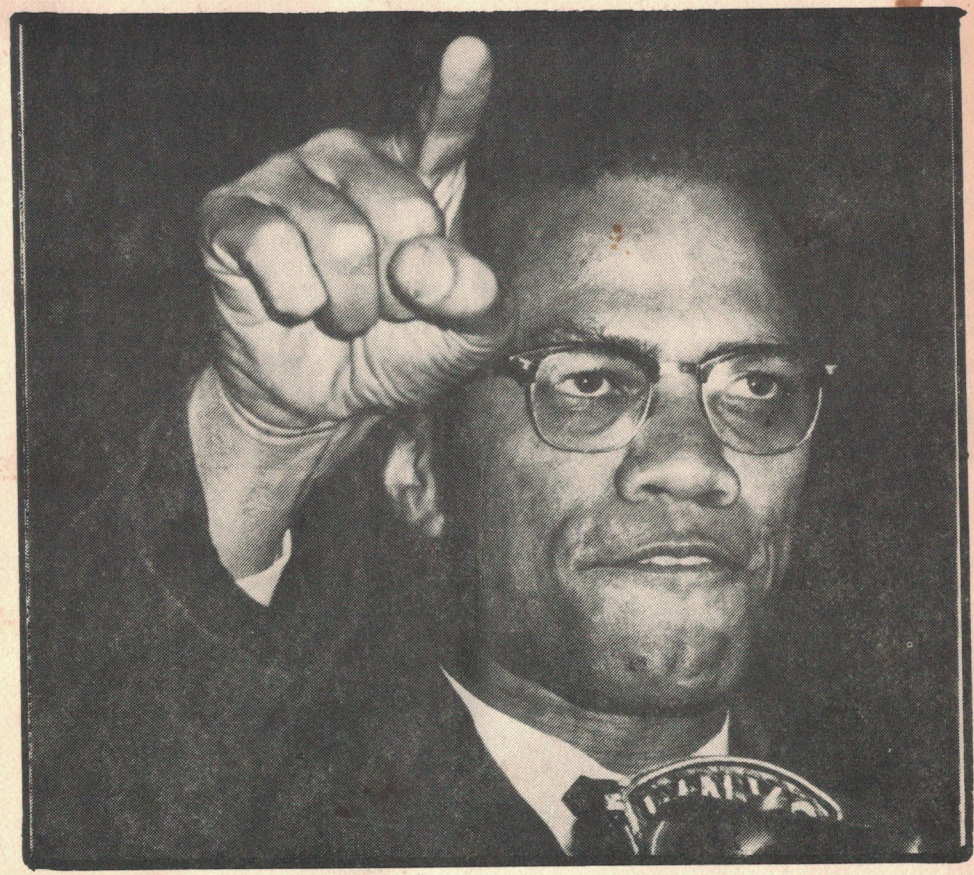

"Political Development of a nation can be determined by the political Development of its women."
Bro. Malcolm X